

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of United States Forces to Albania, Macedonia, and Kosovo

June 5, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Since my previous reports to the Congress under section 8115 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 1999 (Public Law 105-262), the continuing humanitarian crisis created by Belgrade's repression of its own citizens has resulted in thousands of additional refugees fleeing into neighboring countries. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that there are now 443,000 Kosovar refugees in Albania, 246,000 in Macedonia, and another 68,000 in Montenegro. In addition, there could be as many as 700,000 displaced persons still remaining within Kosovo. In both Albania and Macedonia, the number of refugees continues to over-tax the limited resources of the host countries. Efforts by military personnel, in support of civilian assistance efforts, have been critical to establishing refugee camps and necessary infrastructure.

In light of the continuing crisis, I have directed that additional U.S. forces be deployed to Albania to assist in refugee relief operations, including to improve airfield ramp and off-load capabilities, upgrade key roads and bridges to facilitate movement of refugees to safe areas and transportation of relief supplies, and to assist in the provision of additional shelter for refugees.

In parallel with the military support for refugee relief, we are continuing to increase the pressure on Milosevic to accept NATO's conditions, while simultaneously preparing for success. Belgrade's recent acceptance of the document delivered by Finnish President Ahtisaari and Russian Special Envoy Chernomyrdin is an encouraging development, though we are taking a very cautious approach until the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's (FRY's) intentions are clear.

In line with this strategy, I have increased the number of U.S. military personnel assigned to support Task Force HAWK, our deep strike task force in Albania. I have authorized the deployment of a significant contingent of military personnel to Kosovo as part of an international security presence (KFOR), including some forces that may be pre-positioned in Macedonia

prior to entry into Kosovo, as well as the deployment of other military personnel to the region, including Macedonia, as a national support element for U.S. forces in KFOR. However, forces will not enter Kosovo unless it is clear that Belgrade has adopted NATO's conditions and is withdrawing its forces.

In regard to the elements of section 8115(a)(1)–(8), I am providing the following information:

1. & 2. *National Security Interests.* I hereby certify that the deployment of additional forces to Albania, Macedonia, and Kosovo as described above is necessary in the national security interests of the United States. The deployments will provide additional relief for the refugees and help to return them to their homes with security and self-government. In doing so, the deployments serve our national security interests by promoting peace and stability in this volatile region, by strengthening NATO, and by demonstrating to other would-be aggressors in and around Europe that the United States and the Alliance will not stand by idly while they commit war crimes or seek to spread instability.

3. *Numbers.* The number of U.S. personnel to be deployed cannot be definitively provided at this time since planning for the deployments is ongoing. For relief operations, it is anticipated that the number of additional personnel should be approximately 4,000, bringing the total number of U.S. personnel associated with relief operations in Albania to approximately 5,000. This is in addition to the total of approximately 5,500 personnel that will be associated with the deep strike task force now deployed to Albania. In addition, if it is clear that Belgrade has adopted NATO's conditions and is withdrawing its forces, I anticipate that approximately 7,000 personnel will be deployed as part of KFOR and approximately 1,500 personnel will be deployed as part of the national support element in the region, including Macedonia, to facilitate the flow of support to KFOR.

I will ensure that the Congress is informed in a timely manner concerning any significant changes to the deployments described in this report when such information is available.

4. *Mission/Objectives.* Our overall objective is to return the refugees to their homes with safety and security, to provide necessary refugee relief in the interim, and to promote peace and stability in the region. The specific missions of the forces involved are:

- Joint Task Force SHINING HOPE: To facilitate military operations by assisting the UNHCR in providing emergency relief to refugees in Albania.
- Task Force HAWK: To provide a deep strike force capability in support of NATO air operations and to be ready for use against FRY forces at a time and manner of our choosing.
- Operation JOINT GUARDIAN (KFOR): To deploy a military presence in a permissive environment to deter renewed hostilities, and, if necessary, enforce a cease-fire and the demilitarization of Kosovo, and to establish a secure environment for the stabilization of the humanitarian situation and the establishment and operation of an international provisional administration.

5. *Schedule.* At this point, it is not possible to determine how long NATO operations in the region will need to continue, nor how long U.S. forces will be needed to assist in refugee relief operations, and therefore how long these deployments will need to be maintained.

6. *Exit Strategy.* The duration of the requirement for U.S. military presence will depend on the course of events, and in particular, on Belgrade's actions.

- For Joint Task Force SHINING HOPE, military support to refugee relief may need to continue for some time, even if a settlement allows for refugees to begin to return. Ultimately, responsibilities for refugee relief will be transferred to the UNHCR, other humanitarian organizations, and host countries.
- Some elements of Task Force HAWK may deploy as initial elements of KFOR. In this case, the exit strategy for Task Force HAWK will become the same as that for KFOR. The remaining elements will continue deployment in support of NATO operations until no longer required.
- For Operation JOINT GUARDIAN, after the withdrawal of all Serb forces from Kosovo and an initial stabilization period,

KFOR will be progressively reduced as the security situation permits and local police forces are established. At a time to be determined, KFOR will transfer responsibilities to the international provisional administration and local institutions and ultimately transition to a different set of security arrangements.

7. *Costs.* The costs of operations in the Kosovo region will initially be paid from the FY 99 Defense appropriations in the supplemental appropriations bill recently enacted. As we further refine the detailed plans for KFOR, and as attendant costs become better known, I will consult with Congress as to how any additional costs should be covered.

8. *Effect on Morale, Retention and Readiness.* These deployments affect morale, retention and readiness in a positive way because they demonstrate U.S. commitment of necessary resources to maximize operational effectiveness toward achievement of the important U.S. objectives in Kosovo. Given the importance of these deployments, we anticipate that U.S. forces would maintain the highest morale and effectiveness while fulfilling the range of military objectives encompassed by these deployments, including refugee relief operations and the anticipated contribution to the international security force in Kosovo. Indeed, it has been our experience that personnel serving in these important and demanding positions experience higher retention rates than in other, less challenging assignments. The Department of Defense has underway extensive and effective programs to do what is necessary to manage personnel and other resources so as to reduce problems such as extended family separation and other burdens military service. As with any operational deployment, the effects on readiness are mixed. In this case, however, it is expected that many of the U.S. forces will be conducting operations as they were trained to perform, which will provide an unparalleled opportunity to apply their skills in an active environment. The Administration is committed to ensuring that America's armed forces maintain the high levels of readiness necessary to safeguard America's national security.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This

letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 7.

Remarks at the White House Conference on Mental Health June 7, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. I want to, first of all, thank all of you for coming, the Members of Congress of both parties, members of our administration, but the larger community represented here in this room and at all of our sites.

This has been a truly remarkable experience, I think, for all of us—stimulating, moving, humbling. I think it's because it is so real, and it has been too long since we have come together over something that's this real, that touches so many of us.

This is a moment of great hope for people who are living with mental illness and, therefore, a moment of great promise for our Nation. We know a lot about it; we know a lot more than most of us know we know, as we found out today. And we wanted to have this conference to talk about how far we've come and also to look forward into the future.

We all know we wouldn't be here today without the commitment of Tipper Gore. I asked her to be my national adviser for mental illness because she knows more and cares more about this issue than anyone else I personally know. She has dedicated herself to making this a priority of national policy and private life. And I think we are all very, very much in her debt.

I would also like to say one more word about Tipper and about the Vice President, about the way they have dealt with this issue as a family and the gifts they have given to America, going back to before the time when we all became a team in the election of 1992, when they began their annual family conferences. All people in public life talk about family values. No couple in public life has ever done remotely as much to try to figure out what it would mean to turn those family values into real, concrete improvements in the lives of ordinary families as Al and Tipper Gore have over a long period of time.

I sort of feel like an anticlimax at this convention—not for the reasons the political reporters think—[laughter]—but because the real story here is in the people who have already talked, in their stories of courage and struggle, of endurance and hope. Americans with mental illness should have the same opportunity all Americans have to live to the fullest of their God-given ability. They are, perhaps, just the latest in our enduring challenge as a people to continue the work of our Founders, to widen the circle of opportunity, to deepen the meaning of freedom, to strengthen the bonds of our community.

But what a challenge it has been. Clearly, people with mental illnesses have always had to struggle to be treated fairly and to get the treatment they need—and they still do. We have made a lot of progress by appealing to the better angels of our nature, by drawing on our deep belief in equality, but also by hearing these stories.

So again, I want to thank Mike and John and Jennifer and Robin and Dr. Burton. I thank Dr. Hyman, Dr. Koplewicz. I thank Lynn Rivers.

I think all of us can remember some moment in our lives where, because of something that happened in our families or something someone we knew wrote or said, we began to look at this issue in a different way. I, myself, feel particularly indebted to the courage of my friend the great author William Styron for writing the book he wrote about his own depression. But I think that it is not enough to be moved. We have to have hope, and then we have to have some sense about where we're going.

It was no accident that all of you were clapping loudly when Dr. Hyman showed us pictures of the brain. I remember when Hillary and I first met and began going together 28 years ago, and she was working at the Yale Child Study Center and the hospital, and we began